

# The Broken Middle

DILIP SIMEON

The violent events of 1984 signify the breakdown of consensual politics and the ideal of composite Indian nationhood. When communal animosity spreads across society, it corrodes the social conscience and (directly or subliminally) produces a genocidal consensus. In the aftermath of 1984 we also witnessed the decay of a reliable criminal justice system, the effects of which are still unfolding. It is time for us to see beyond parties, and pay attention to the functions of communal ideology. The reality today is that extremism is a mainstream phenomenon.

*If justice perishes, human life on earth has lost its meaning*

– Immanuel Kant

*Once crime was as solitary as a cry of protest; now it is as universal as science. Yesterday it was put on trial; today it determines the law*

– Albert Camus

The year 1984 remains India's Orwellian year par excellence. Why? Because it is the defining moment at which the language of public life became loaded with the requirement of deceit. The gap between official and political utterances and the evidence of our eyes and ears became an unbridgeable chasm; and even the thin pretension that state institutions and the Government of India existed to uphold the law of the land and the security of citizens was dropped into a furnace and evaporated into thin air. There is nothing more terrifying than the sensation that truth itself has ceased to exist, that silence is all that is left to us because no one is listening, or none may be trusted. That was what I, and many of my friends and fellow citizens, felt in those three days in late 1984 – and indeed in the months and years that followed.

The violent events that swept through New Delhi and other urban centres in 1984 were a state-enabled, politically sponsored, communally-inspired carnage of Sikh citizens because they belonged to the same community as the assassins of the prime minister. State power rested with the Congress Party. Most of the killers were ordinary people who, egged on by senior Delhi Congressmen and their local henchmen, believed in the primitive idea of collective guilt (i.e., that all members of a community carry responsibility for the crimes committed by some amongst them). Very likely they also believed that they would neither be stopped, nor face trial for their deeds. Indeed, many rioters believed that they were engaged in patriotic activity, that mass murder was something that their political leaders and patrons actively desired. Moreover, many people with no political connections spoke in terms of Sikhs needing to be taught a lesson, etc.

In effect, we were in an atmosphere of genocidal consensus. I do not mean that everyone had become a potential murderer, but that a large section of the population that did not directly attack Sikhs nevertheless condoned such attacks or remained indifferent to the takeover of the streets by hooligans. Communal violence has been a constant feature of Indian politics since the 1920s, but a state-enabled communal massacre in independent India's capital, under the aegis of the emblematic party of Indian nationalism was unprecedented.

Precisely because of this, 1984 is the year of the broken middle. Mob violence on a mass scale entered mainstream political culture. No longer could it be claimed that the politics

Dilip Simeon is a historian, writer and political commentator based in New Delhi.

of revenge emanated from the margins of the polity. It was the middle ground that was now shattered, giving fresh impetus to communal concepts of nationalism. The year 1984 set a new standard for the normalisation of brutality and lawlessness in the Indian polity. It undermined faith in the Constitution and gave strength to criminal elements in political parties and society at large. It strengthened communal bias within the bureaucracy and police, and generated widespread cynicism.

Having allowed the violence to rage for several days, the commanders of state institutions decided to stop the bloodletting. After that, a tidal wave of frightening words swept through society. Contemporary speech could broadly be divided into two kinds – blatant justification, as in “they deserved it” (which had the merit of frankness); and varieties of escapism and/or self-exoneration, as in “Sikhs distributed sweets after the assassination”, “in any family sometimes the elder brother has to slap the younger brother”, “Congress workers are responsible, not us”, “after all, they killed the prime minister, it was an outpouring of patriotic grief”, “when a great tree is uprooted, the ground is bound to shake”, etc. The year 1984 prompted our opinion-makers and ideologues to indulge in a gigantic cover-up operation that was simultaneously an exercise in self-delusion. Partisan buck-passing was raised to the level of an art form. Who has not heard it said that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)/Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) cannot be condemned for the Gujarat carnage of 2002, because, after all, the Congress also engineered carnage in 1984? This argument acts like an opiate for some of us. Everybody is guilty, ergo nobody is. One massacre deserves another.

In 1984, one saw official bias at work precisely when the neutral authority of the state was most needed. Violent mobs were shouting communal slogans, desecrating gurdwaras and burning Sikh passers-by in the streets to assert communal superiority. And, many residents of Delhi were enjoying the spectacle. Yet, in the midst of all this, what we got was a passive Home Minister Narasimha Rao, delayed summoning of sufficient armed force, biased utterances and abetment of crimes by policemen on duty, non-registration of first information reports (FIRs), doctoring of evidence, deceitful behaviour of public prosecutors, irresponsible behaviour by mass media sometimes amounting to instigation of violence, blatant judicial whitewash, punishment transfers of responsible functionaries, and collusion amongst bureaucrats, police and political executives to the point of granting one another impunity for criminal negligence or worse.<sup>1</sup> Instances of gang-rape are still being covered up. Most of these features were visible in Gujarat in 2002, including the shameless speed with which political gain (calling elections in a communally charged environment) was extracted from the revengeful climate. Advertisements issued by the Congress Party during the 1984 Lok Sabha elections appealed to such sentiments by representing India's border shrinking inwards. These factors point towards criminal complicity at the highest level of state institutions. Such complicity cannot work unless large numbers of responsible officials are biased, and, moreover, unless they believe that the public at large is cynical or equally complicit.

In January 1985, newly elected Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi entered a joint session of Parliament accompanied by President Zail Singh and H K L Bhagat, a man whose constituency was the venue of some of the worst violence (*The Times of India* 1996). A resolution was adopted condoling Indira Gandhi's death. Rajiv made a mild statement of sympathy, but no one saw it fit to condole the deaths of thousands of Indians cruelly murdered for no fault of theirs. Twenty-one years later, on 11 August 2005, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh declared in the Rajya Sabha that 1984 was “a great national shame, a great national tragedy”, and that he had “no hesitation in apologising not only to the Sikh community but the whole Indian nation”. He denied that the Congress leadership was complicit in the violence, whilst admitting that certain leaders had been implicated by the Nanawati Commission. Jagdish Tytler was obliged to leave the ministry, and Sajjan Kumar his local government post.

The most enigmatic question that 1984 confronts us with is why and how the larger world can, without warning, drag innocent people into a hell of agony and despair. At such moments, not just state institutions, but the very universe reeks of injustice. In such situations, even a simple acknowledgement of our suffering can help ease the pain. But our tallest political leaders were incapable of this – in fact their utterances and behaviour rubbed salt into the wounds of the bereaved. Whatever this says about Indian policing, it says more about the incoherence of India's conscience, even though some judges use phrases like “collective conscience of the society”.<sup>2</sup> Who are we, after all? What does it mean to be a nation? The year 1984 threw these questions in our faces yet once more. Other than the assumption that might is right, no answer is as yet forthcoming.

### Wool over Our Eyes

What is meant by the phrase “requirement of deceit”? It is quite simple.

It is misleading to say that the actions of the Government of India are always grounded in law, when the police cannot be trusted to cognise terrible crimes transpiring in front of their eyes. To pretend otherwise is deceitful.

It is misleading to say that India's criminal justice system can be trusted to uphold the Constitution, if the utterances of even a single judge carry the odour of communal bias. To pretend otherwise is deceitful.

It is false to say that public prosecution is being conducted in the interest of justice and public order, when the public prosecutors seek to protect wrongdoers. To pretend otherwise is deceitful.

It is misleading to claim that political parties represent the interests of all Indians, when, in fact, we can see them working for sectional interests and/or promoting communal divisiveness. To pretend otherwise is deceitful.

It is false to claim that J S Bhindranwale was merely a religious preacher who was persecuted by the Indian state on account of his campaign to cleanse Sikhism and fight for justice. Such claims seek to wipe away the memory of his involvement in violent crime, contempt for moderation, instigation of hatred, desecration of the Golden Temple and pretension to speak for the entire Sikh community. To pretend otherwise is deceitful.

It is misleading to frame the question of responsibility in purely partisan language, such as “Congress killed Sikhs”. Senior Congressmen were the prime movers of the carnage, but it is not enough to say this. Such a frame glosses over the intense and palpable communal hatred intrinsic to the violence of 1984. It disguises the fact that the killers saw themselves as patriots teaching a lesson to “anti-national Sikhs”. It overlooks the surcharged communal atmosphere in north India in the early 1980s, an atmosphere that Prime Minister Indira Gandhi cynically manipulated from time to time. It does not explain why many people with no sympathy for the Congress applauded the violence as just retribution meted out to an entire community. It cannot explain why Sajjan Kumar, still under trial for his acts in 1984, received the maximum number of votes in India in the 2004 elections.<sup>3</sup> In 1984, the Congress transformed itself into a vehicle for communal ideology and violence. But ideology has origins over and beyond organisations. The ideological feature is as important to remember as the organisational one. To pretend otherwise is deceitful.

The partisan approach also diverts our attention from the acceptability of controlled mobs, private armies, vigilante groups and political assassination. Private armies have thrived in India since before 1947. In November 1947, the All India Congress Committee (AICC), which included Patel and Nehru, passed a resolution naming “the Muslim National Guards, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Akali Volunteers and such other organizations” as “an endeavour to bring into being private armies”, calling them “a menace to the hard-won freedom of the country”.<sup>4</sup> However, the Indian polity has been unable to control vigilantism, which operates across a broad political spectrum.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the seamless links between private armies and so-called “mainstream” parties indicate that the ruling elites do not wish to, or cannot do away with them. Sometimes, these formations acquire an autonomous or semi-autonomous existence. An examination of the political, human and financial resources of the insurgent groups of the North-East, the Khalistani armed factions of the 1980s, Islamist *lashkars* and mujahidin, and numerous caste-based vigilante groups can reveal these links. The Shiv Sena named itself an army and repeatedly engaged in hooliganism against ethnic minorities in Mumbai. Its leader hailed the terrorist expertise of the Tamil Tigers, aside from his numerous speech-acts of violent incitement (*The Times of India* 2003). Yet, it remains a pillar of the establishment in Maharashtra.

Privatised violence is the elephant in India’s drawing room. It is the clue to the phenomenon of mainstream extremism. Indian governments tend to depict “left-wing extremism” as India’s biggest security threat, whilst simultaneously sheltering armed formations such as the Salwa Judum and Ranvir Sena, and permitting RSS-affiliated paramilitaries and fronts such as the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Bajrang Dal, along with fanatical Islamist ulema, to freely indulge in hate speech and hooliganism. The Maoist armed groups are just one among many private armies, and they too have links with vested interests. To pretend that networks of vigilantes can operate for decades without some level of support from bourgeois civil society is to deceive ourselves.

Thus, the phrase “requirement of deceit” implies that large sections of society, across all communities and beyond the elites, need a diet of lies to sustain themselves, to disguise their complicity in mass crime, to convince themselves of their own virtue, or to enable daily life to transpire as if nothing dire had ever happened. This requirement also arises from the widespread human tendency to highlight things that buttress our arguments, and forget the things that make us uneasy. We wish good and evil to be clearly demarcated, but unfortunately they often come in mixtures. This is another reason for the generation of necessary illusion.

### Recollections

Recollections of 1984 are a means of preserving the lived experience of those events. Two important documents are the citizen’s report entitled *Who Are the Guilty?* (Mukhoty and Kothari 1984), and *Delhi Riots: Three Days in the Life of a Nation* (Chakravarti and Haksar 1987), a collection of first-person accounts. Mitta and Phoolka’s book on the carnage appeared in 2007. Pritam Singh’s (2010) work on human rights includes a history of events prior to June 1984. All of these deserve a close reading.

I will place here some of my own memories. As a child, I had heard of communal killings from my father, an army officer posted in Fort William during the Calcutta Killing of 1946. I had never imagined I would witness anything similar. In 1984, I was a lecturer in Ramjas College in Delhi University. On 1 November, I joined a peace demonstration in Lajpat Nagar. We were confronted by *trishul*-carrying mobs on the rampage. We met Sikh taxi drivers weeping in fear and humiliation, and saw gurdwaras on fire. Columns of smoke rose from various parts of the city, which felt like a war zone. To my dismay, I heard about students participating in the violence, and some teachers speak approvingly of it. (I must add that some students sheltered Sikhs in their hostels.)

Very soon, decent-minded citizens put together a huge relief effort, named the Nagrik Ekta Manch, to deliver material/medical aid and look for trapped people. I joined a rescue operation in the Trilokpuri area, to the address of a young widow. The lane was in a lower-middle-class locality. Its one Sikh house was identifiable by its charred appearance. The front door was gone, and the molten blades of the ceiling fan in the main room hung downwards. My colleague Nitya and I, accompanied by a constable, climbed up the stairs to the *barsati*. It took a while for the door to be opened. Inside were a young woman, her mother and two small children. When the infant girl in her mother’s arms saw the policeman’s lathi she burst into tears, whimpering “*meri mummy ko mat maaro*”. She had seen her grandfather and father being beaten and burnt to death. To this day I remain shaken and deeply moved by the plight of these people, reduced to refugee status in their own city. Where are those children today? What sense will they ever make of what happened?

On 24 November 1984 some university teachers organised a demonstration against the carnage. It was the only one of its kind in Delhi. Needless to say the much touted “mainstream”

was absent; nor was there any protest by the RSS family, for all their talk of Sikhs being Keshdhari Hindus and the ping-pong they play with the Congress on 1984 versus 2002. We *jholawallahs* were the only ones to protest the massacre out on the streets. About 5,000 people from all walks of life – teachers, students, auto drivers, artisans from Jama Masjid area – walked from Red Fort to Boat Club. Passers-by on the road joined in. There were no *bhai-bhai* slogans, just the demand for justice. At places, some Congress-led counter-demonstrators stood by the roadside screaming at us for being *desh-drohi*. I was stunned to see the hatred in their eyes. In their minds, it was patriotic to indulge in mass murder, and anti-national to ask for justice. The same perverse concept of nationalism is active today. Barring one ultra-left group, the communist parties were absent, although members of their student affiliates enthusiastically participated.

Our demonstration was blacked out by the media. Only the *Indian Express* carried three lines on an inside page (25 November 1984). Two weeks later a commentator wrote an opinion piece in *The Statesman* on the danger of extremism. According to him 5,000 armed Sikhs had marched down Daryaganj calling for bloody revenge! Thus may journalists spread dangerous lies. Many ordinary people appreciated our march, which remains the most significant demonstration I have ever attended.

Also in November 1984, students of Hindu College invited comrade Sumanta Banerjee and me to address them on the events. The college seminar room was too small for the crowd, and the auditorium had to be opened. We later learned that some teachers had strongly resisted the use of the auditorium – which was packed. The mood was grim and the audience clearly opposed to communal politics, even though there was much confusion about the issue. Among other things I said that communal violence could not be resisted by more violence, but only by a mass democratic movement for socialist goals cutting across community identities. I remember one Sikh student approaching me afterwards, with tears in his eyes, saying he wanted justice more than anything else. There was little I could say to comfort him.

### Sampradayikta Virodhi Andolan

The Sampradayikta Virodhi Andolan (SVA), a self-funded citizens group, was founded in November 1984 by some of the activists working in the relief camps. We wanted to engage in systematic activity to pre-empt communal violence, rather than merely react to its consequences. It fought against communal politics and demonstrated repeatedly to have the guilty of 1984 prosecuted. Over the years we learned of shadowy “Shakti Dals” emerging in the east Delhi colonies, which served the interests of political leaders implicated in the violence; efforts by the police to avoid the registration of FIRs, intimidation of witnesses and hypocritical behaviour by public prosecutors. All this was in the context of the Justice Ranganath Misra Commission of Inquiry (1985), whose findings we believed to be a whitewash. The SVA also hosted discussions about communalism. In January 1989 it adopted a constitution and rules of membership. Two stalwart communists, Satyapal Dang and Gursharan Singh, attended the

foundation conference. That year, three members (Purushottam Agrawal, the late Jugnu Ramaswamy, and I) travelled to Punjab as part of our campaign. The SVA was a direct offshoot of the violence of 1984, and lasted till 1993.<sup>6</sup>

On 6 February 1985, I attended the high court hearing of the Peoples Union for Democratic Rights’ (PUDR) appeal for an order directing the police to file FIRs. Handed a copy of *Who Are the Guilty?*, the judge threw it aside contemptuously and denounced teachers, journalists and civil liberties organisations. When PUDR president Gobinda Mukhoty reminded him that grave crimes had taken place, and asked for an order asking the Delhi police to register cases, the judge said “there was a background to it”. His words appeared to justify the murder of innocents as a form of collective retribution. There is a background to all crime, but only a fair investigation can establish whether it is relevant to the judicial process. It is not the business of a judge to make prejudicial observations, especially when the initiation of due legal process is all that is being asked for. Communal hatred was evident in his utterances. He was subsequently elevated to the Supreme Court.<sup>7</sup>

Until 1984, official representations of Bhagat Singh were in popular iconic form: clean shaven with moustache, hat and revolver. Then, Blue Star and the massacre took place. On 23 March 1985, the usual government advertisements appeared reminding us of the great man. But, this time they depicted Bhagat Singh wearing a turban and beard, along with Sukhdev and Rajguru wearing Nehru caps. This was when Delhi police were refusing to register FIRs. In the aftermath of mass murder, our government was busy subverting the Constitution, but it also thought it fit to remind us that Bhagat Singh was a Sikh.

Early in 1986, the SVA decided to lobby members of the National Integration Council on the question of communalism and the need for justice. We drafted an appeal, which later appeared in *Mainstream* (SVA 1986). Some of us were deputed to meet political leaders. I was asked to meet a senior national leader of the BJP, to whom I was introduced by a colleague. The leader was very cordial and he and his wife had tea with me. I gave him our appeal, and sought to draw him out on the hateful nature of communal propaganda and the sheer irrationalism of campaigns around Lord Buddha’s teeth, Guru Gobind Singh’s horses and Lord Ram’s birthplace. At one point, this leader looked at me and said, “Indians cannot be mobilised on economic issues”. This was an astounding statement, both for its implicit avowal of utility as a factor in the choice of political rhetoric, as well as the naivety with which he said it. Perhaps, he did not realise that his words conveyed a sense of the end justifying the means. The end was, quite simply, power at any cost.

Among the other frank statements he made was the revelation that his own party colleagues in Delhi were telling him “not to inflate” figures of Sikhs killed in the carnage. This was the most candid admission I have ever heard of communal bias against Sikhs within the BJP. (I have already argued that communal feelings cut across political affiliation. This was evident in the campus. When our staff association president proposed that we donate a day’s salary for relief, the “parivar” faction refused on the ground they had made donations in

their localities.) Anyway, I appreciated this person's frankness, but was struck by the combination of cordiality and ruthlessness. For the record, RSS/BJP cadres were implicated in cases of arson, rioting, murder and dacoity by the Jain-Aggrawal Committee (Dikshit 1994; Sharma 2002).

### Impact on Politics and Society

Communal violence in India has a long history. In his book on Pakistan, B R Ambedkar (1946) used the term "civil war" to refer to communal relations in India between 1920 and 1940. Communal ideologies are based on the assumption that shared religious beliefs produce shared political interests. In essence, they embody an authoritarian impulse for the compulsory unification of ideas. Opposed to this is the view that shared religious affiliation need not produce a shared vision or sectarian inclinations. Gandhi, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Baba Kharak Singh and Maulana Azad were all deeply religious. Their politics were based on composite nationhood, *muttahida kaumiyat*. They were also adherents of non-violence. Communalists, on the other hand would rather see a Hindu party, Muslim party, Sikh party, and so on. Religion here becomes a badge of identity, rather than a source of wisdom and moral guidance. Politicised religion tends to see people in terms of those who are "chosen" and those who are superfluous. The politics of inclusion and exclusion leads directly to ethnic cleansing and ghettoisation. Psychologically, it is associated with revenge and male honour. As pseudo-religion, it is obsessed with purification. Above all, fear and trauma nourish communal ideas. The Partition riots, in which up to 5 lakh people of all communities died and 14 million were forced to migrate, exemplify the genocidal implications of Indian communalism.<sup>8</sup>

One aspect of the Rajiv-Longowal Accord of 1985 (the references to the scope of the Ranganath Misra Commission) showed that communal assumptions had become entrenched in Indian politics. Why did either party presume that the Akali Dal was entitled to address the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi and other cities? Legally speaking, the religious affiliation of the victims was irrelevant. Indian citizens had been murdered, and the police was bound to identify and punish the guilty. As they were not doing their duty, the investigation of the allegation of conspiracy was a red herring. Meanwhile the Misra Commission exonerated Congress leaders and passed the buck to the police. A series of inquiries were instituted from the late 1980s onwards, up until 2000.<sup>9</sup> When substantial recommendations were made, they led either to prolonged foot-dragging by the government, or even outright defiance. It took years of pressure for the course of justice to begin and very few convictions have been secured. The process of stalling justice in cases of mass crimes received a major impetus. All this strengthened official impunity and led to a spiral of violence, which still continues.

Ordinary people are often filled with prejudices. They are quite capable of doing horrible things. In times of grave crisis, political leaders have an obligation to speak wisely, to pursue justice in a transparent manner and preserve human dignity. They ought not to reinforce popular prejudice, but should speak reasonably to calm passions. However, in the years

immediately before and (long) after 1984, India's political leaders refused to practise restraint, often preferring to play with fire. In the late 1980s the "Parivar" launched its campaign to seize and destroy Babri Masjid. This too led to thousands of deaths in 1990 and 1992. It is no secret that the 2002 violence was related to this campaign. (I find it remarkable that those who ask us to forget 2002 keep telling us never to forget 1528.<sup>10</sup>) In sum, the events of 1984 acted as a force-multiplier to the all-round criminalisation of Indian society.

A study of ideological factors helps avoid the errors of partisan reductionism. The back and forth between Congress and the BJP leads us away from a simple question: is criticism of the Congress identical with a rejection of moderation? Is it the Congress that is being targeted or the very idea of composite nationalism? There is a difference between a party that lays claim to an idea, and the idea itself. Is religion-based nationalism a recipe for a stable society? Do opponents of the Congress need to join hands with communalists (of any variety)? Should secular demands such as federalism and respect for human rights be tied up with communal antagonism? Regardless of our estimate of Mahatma Gandhi, it is undeniable that he opposed communal violence and resisted the transfer of population till his dying day. Communal politics may appear to be an opposition to the Congress, but 1984 was evidence of communal bias within the Congress. Communalism is not an opposition to a party – though many portray it as such.<sup>11</sup> Rather, communal politics embody the rejection of the very ideal of inclusive, composite nationhood. Those of us who refuse to see this distinction (between ideals and parties) are being taken for a ride whose destination we chose not to see. One fact told a big story – the number of BJP Members of Parliament elected to the 1985 Lok Sabha was precisely two, because Hindutva voters had switched to the Congress. This is why communalism cannot be reduced to partisan affiliations, even if some parties propagate communalism whilst others make pragmatic adjustments to it.

Rather than conflate the symptom with the root phenomenon, we must try and see what is generic. The use of 1984 as a counter to 2002 is a means of dismissing the crucial issue of accountability and the decay of criminal justice in both cases. (In Gujarat, on the few occasions when justice has been done, it entailed Supreme Court interventions and sometimes even the shifting of trials.) It also symbolises our indifference to violence. Many Indians do not believe that involvement in mass crimes should disqualify anyone from holding executive power. They distinguish "development" from justice, forgetting that "development" without secular norms and lawful governance will lead to tyranny. That is why our capitalists are fond of the "Chinese model".

### Meditations

Some secularists think religion will fade away with the advance of science. This is a pipe dream, not only because science and mathematics are ethically neutral, but because it is the nature of humans to ask unanswerable questions. Religion is the sphere of absolute truth. As such it lends itself to authoritarianism. But, it is also the sphere of mindfulness – an indication of the

thoughtful character of the human being. We yearn for a resolution to the enigmas and contradictions of life, for simplified answers that can concentrate our experience into a single feeling. In our time, this feature of religion has been appropriated by authoritarian politics for the needs of the nation state. The subject is vast and complicated, but needs to be addressed.

After 1984, I began to study communal politics seriously. In 1985, I wrote a research piece that was published in 1986. One of the issues I addressed was the decay of religious traditions:

it is time to stop defining Indian secularism as if it meant an arithmetical total of communally defined entities. If Bhindranwale has superseded Guru Nanak, if Pakistan is the model for a truly Islamic society, and if the activities of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Shiv Sena and RSS amount to a Hindu renaissance ... then we had better recognize that the putrefaction of religious traditions is just as much a part of an all-round social crisis as, say, the debt bomb or the arms race. Deprived of the refreshing oxygen of a genuine cultural and social revolution, Indian nationalism is now choking on its own poison. Since the moral fabric is so completely fragmented as to render even the quality of innocence into communally divided categories, the very first precept of any new secularism must be the inculcation of a basic respect for human life (Simeon 1986).

All that I would change here is to extend the scenario to south Asia as a whole. For example, certain Buddhist monks and their organisations in Burma and Sri Lanka have been engaged in instigating violence. A notorious Burmese monk named Saydaw Wirathu has spent nine years in prison for incitement, and has (reportedly) taken the title of the Burmese bin Laden. Those interested may research the violence in Meiktila in 2013 when tens of thousands of Rohingya Muslims were driven from their homes and nearly 200 killed. Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi did not condemn the violence, but there are those like the monk Sein Ni Ta, who launched cross-faith relief efforts, condemned the religious leaders who participated in the riots and denounced the “systematic massacre” in Meiktila (*The Nanyang Post* 2013).

In Sri Lanka, the extremist Bodu Bala Sena (BBS) or Buddhist Brigade, is supported by Sri Lanka’s defence secretary Gotabhaya Rajapaksa, the president’s brother. (The government was also implicated in the assassination of the journalist Lasantha Wickrematunge.<sup>12</sup>) In June 2014, Wataraka Vijitha Thero, a monk who defends religious minorities and is critical of the BBS, was beaten unconscious (*BBC News* 2014). In January 2014, Bangladesh’s political leadership was unable to prevent vicious attacks on Hindus and Buddhists by Islamist fanatics after national elections. The savagery reminded people of the massacres unleashed by the Pakistani Army in 1971. The links between the Opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and the Jamaat-e-Islami, whose cadres spearheaded the violence, is no secret (Habib 2014).

As for Pakistan, let us remember human rights activist Rashid Rehman, shot dead in May 2014 for defending blasphemy accused Junaid Hafeez, a university lecturer who continues to languish in jail. In 2011, Punjab governor Salman Taseer was murdered by his bodyguard for advocating a change in the blasphemy law and sympathising with Aasia Bibi, a Dalit Christian brick-kiln worker and mother jailed in 2010 on a charge of insulting the Prophet. Aasia was convicted

by a trial court on a mere accusation and the Lahore High Court has recently upheld the sentence. She has been condemned to death before being heard. In brief, the justice system in this Islamic nuclear power is incapable of delivering due process to a destitute person.

Islamic extremism is racing towards self-destruction. The memory of Pakistan’s Nobel prize winner, Abdus Salam has been wiped out – even his gravestone has been desecrated because he was an Ahmediya. Bangladesh’s Nobel prize winner Muhammad Yunus has been denounced by an officially-sponsored campaign as being un-Islamic, for defending the rights of gay people in Uganda. In India, fanatics routinely call for Taslima Nasrin to be beheaded, Muslim youth to be mobilised for holy war, and Bangladeshi war criminals to be defended (Chatterjee 2013; *Bangladesh Independent News Network* 2013).

I would like to believe that most Indian Muslims prefer to lead a peaceful life than remain in a state of outrage about Rushdie and Taslima. Yet many political leaders believe that secularism implies concessions to small-minded Muslim conservatives, in the mistaken belief that the entire community is owned by a handful of aggressive ulema. The practice of conceding an imaginary “right not to be offended” to all self-appointed defenders of the faith, including RSS-sponsored educationists, has opened a Pandora’s box of hurt sentiment. If Islam is endangered by Aasia Bibi, Muhammad Yunus and Abdus Salam, by Taslima Nasrin, Rashid Rehman and Junaid Hafeez, the very nature and purpose of religious faith need to be questioned.

### Nineteen Eighty-four

Let us now briefly recapitulate the events of 1984. Here is an extract from an article by Hartosh Singh Bal (2012):

Many Indians outside Punjab need to be reminded that Bhindranwale was the man who necessitated Operation Blue Star in the first place. He was not alone to blame, this turn of events would not have been possible without considerable help from Indira Gandhi, who, irked by the Akali resistance to the Emergency, had propped him up to challenge the Akali hold over the Sikh orthodoxy. As she discovered, he was not a man so easily controlled and was soon enough acting on his own ... Bhindranwale was no thinker. He had no coherent position on any complex issue, but was willing to mouth the rhetoric that ensured the Akalis were afraid of losing their own constituency, and he was willing to do something the Akalis had never done, use violence to achieve political ends. His hitmen, such as Surinder Singh Sodhi, assassinated a number of people who earned his wrath. He had also dabbled in politics, openly supporting Congress candidates against the Akalis at one point and then trying to put up his own candidates for elections to the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) ... with little success ... This man, a terrorist who thought nothing of using violence to terrorise and kill his opponents, whether Sikhs or Hindus, a man who never enjoyed popular support within the Sikh community ... was truly converted into a sant (holy man) by the stupidity of the Indian State.

And here is Rajdeep Sardesai (2013):

whether you travel to the outskirts of Ahmedabad to Citizen Nagar to meet 2002 riot victims living next to a garbage dump, or to the overflowing drains of Tilak Vihar where the widows of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots live, or the makeshift homes for Kashmiri Pandit families in Jammu, the one common factor that binds these groups is the fact that their condition represents the utter failure of the Indian State to uphold the rule of law. This is not about being Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus: it is about a society that doesn’t protect and provide justice to its own.

The two comments summarise our predicament, and I honour these journalists for their forthright statement of unpleasant truths. What they say is relevant for all of us. Bhindranwale's early social reform activities were soon supplanted by tyrannical behaviour. Despite his affirmations of being apolitical, neither his political interventions nor his links with the senior Congress leadership were a secret. From 1978 onwards, his exhortations and the actions of his followers became extremely violent and intemperate.<sup>13</sup> He hailed the killer of the Nirankari leader Gurbachan Singh in 1980, and flaunted his capacity to wreak physical retribution on his detractors, many of whom were Sikhs. He remains a polarising figure and it is a serious matter that he is still lionised by sections of Sikh society and religious leaders.

One of the most moving stories from Sikh history is the legend of Malerkotla, a principality whose ruler was blessed by Guru Gobind Singh for trying to save the lives of the Guru's two sons, bricked alive by the governor of Sirhind. When told that Sher Mohammed Khan, Nawab of Malerkotla, had protested vehemently, saying this was contrary to the tenets of Islam, the Guru blessed his house, declaring that its "roots shall remain forever green". Malerkotla was a haven of peace in the partition riots, when fleeing Muslims could find shelter there. This legend evokes the immense power of religious faith to inspire love and compassion. Why should such a tradition feel obliged to incorporate a hate-monger into its pantheon?

Delhi was where Mahatma Gandhi was murdered by a follower of V D Savarkar for being a lover of Muslims. Gandhi's last fast, in January 1948, was to ensure the return to Muslims of the shrine of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Chisti. The Delhi Declaration of 18 January 1948, inspired by him, undertook to safeguard communal harmony, return seized religious places and welcome back people who had fled their homes.<sup>14</sup> It was a triumph of love in the midst of an upsurge of hate. Here is an extract from Gandhi's speech on 18 January:

Delhi is the heart – the capital of India. The leaders from the whole of India have assembled here. Men had become beasts. But if those who have assembled here, who constitute the cream among men cannot make the whole of India understand that Hindus, Muslims and followers of other religions are like brothers, it bodes ill for both the Dominions. What will be the fate of India if we continue to quarrel with one another? ... Let us take no step that may become a cause for repentance later on. The situation demands courage of the highest order from us.<sup>15</sup>

How did the Congress Party degenerate to the point where its senior leaders could preside over a massacre of innocents? Did their subsequent behaviour inspire confidence? Have Congress cadre even heard of the Declaration of 1948? Incidentally, some people celebrated Gandhi's assassination. Sardar Patel had rebuked RSS leader Golwalkar upon learning that "RSS men expressed joy and distributed sweets after Gandhiji's death" (Goyal 2000: 196). A biographer of Gandhi writes:

In the eyes of too many officials, he was an old man who had outlived his usefulness: he had become expendable. By negligence, by indifference, by deliberate desire on the part of many faceless people, the assassination had been accomplished. It was a new kind of murder – the permissive assassination, and there may be many more in the future (Payne 2003: 647).<sup>16</sup>

In an echo of this complicity, on 26 February 2003, India's highest officials unveiled a portrait of V D Savarkar in the Lok Sabha (Nauriya 2003). Our representatives have chosen to honour the prime mover in the Gandhi murder case. How is this different from the glorification of Bhindranwale?

When we realise that independent India's criminal justice system was inaugurated by a denial of justice to Gandhi, we need not be surprised at its deterioration ever since. If religious faith is to be trampled upon by men such as Yogi Adityanath and Pravin Togadia, if Hinduism requires the protection of the RSS, VHP, and Bajrang Dal to remain a living tradition, it is set on a path of inner strife. A great religious tradition cannot be allowed to become the property of intellectual and moral dwarves. It is one thing to be proud of one's tradition. It is quite another to confuse religious devotion with self-worship. It is vulgar to praise oneself incessantly. Praise is best when it comes from others. These groups have trained themselves in physical belligerence and the hatred of "alien" ideas to the point of transforming nationalism into xenophobia. They relentlessly inculcate such ideas in children. They portray millions of their fellow Indians as enemies – such language always carries the potential of becoming a self-fulfilling prophesy.

### A Uniform Criminal Code

India's broken middle may only be restored by moderate speech and non-violence. A great deal depends upon how Hindus conduct themselves. I suspect they know this intuitively, for despite the best efforts of such organisations most Hindus are not inclined towards religious extremism.

If various Indian governments resist violence and lawlessness only in the case of Maoists but not across the board, and not in principle, this hypocrisy will undermine state institutions. It is time for the Indian state to implement the law without discriminating between petty criminals, who sometimes get caught, and the high and mighty ones, who are never punished. Those who agitate for a uniform civil code could ask themselves whether India has a uniform criminal code.

Something more needs to be said. Permissive assassinations are coterminous with genocidal consensus. Passive acquiescence in assassination, whether of one person or thousands, is the most ominous legacy of communal ideology. It has undoubtedly been bequeathed to us by history. But have we shown the capacity to confront and overcome our history? Have our political leaders been statesman-like? A single experience of violence is enough to traumatise a person for life. We can imagine the situation if the person is a child. What happens when a society undergoes repeated cycles of violence and injustice? When thousands experience it? Violence enters the soul.

Here's what a Pakistani columnist wrote last year:

War is a tragedy but a society at war with itself and everything around, with no objective and no remorse is more than a tragedy; it is a total disaster ... Our society is at war with its own religious diversity. It is in a state of schizophrenia passing into paranoia (Haider 2013).

We may judge for ourselves if his comments are applicable to India.

Have our religious leaders reached out to the followers of all faiths? Have they spoken up against violence and inhumanity when people desperately needed moral guidance? If this has happened, I confess I have missed something. In the years following 1984 (and speaking for myself), I have gained more comfort from the words and deeds of people such as Gursharan Singh, Satyapal Dang and V P Singh than from any religious leaders I can think of. During the sva days, I had the honour to meet golden-hearted individuals – ordinary citizens of all faiths, who restored my faith in humanity.<sup>17</sup>

It is sad that despite the efforts of such humble stalwarts, the very word “secularism” is today sneered at by the highest in the land. Messages of love and coexistence are being drowned in the noise of civil war. With honourable exceptions, religious personages have become narrow-minded and eager to acquire wealth and power. Taking such people seriously indicates delusion on the part of the believers. If they continue along this path there will be nothing left of their religions except mindless dogma and moral depravity.

I do not wish to imply that we are doomed to imprisonment in a web of lies. Language itself is impossible without some ideal of truthful speech. Moreover, we humans need to make sense of our past. New generations ask questions, memories are passed on, and things bred in darkness cannot forever escape the sunlight. But, it is a long and hard passage. It is hard because mass complicity in crime – even at the level of mere feeling – perpetuates communal ideologies and generates self-deception, especially as criminal behaviour becomes normalised.

We are in the midst of such a situation now. Powerful forces in society need to cover up the truth – whether about criminal justice, the costs of “growth”, or climate change. The struggle for justice and social betterment is dependent upon an honest dialogue and recounting of the past. Without such a dialogue, we shall remain in an Orwellian labyrinth. 1984 was the point when Indian society submerged itself in propaganda, self-deception and hypocrisy. At present, we show no signs of emerging from these depths. Let us recognise that the scientists of communal identity have succeeded in inventing a machine of perpetual motion, fuelled by human ideas and emotions. The machine will continue to revolve (this is the only visible Indian “revolution” – the cyclical return of sectarian violence) as long as we let it. Only a commitment to truth can stop it.

## Conclusions

In 1949, George Orwell wrote about the totalitarian nightmare facing humanity, and named his book *1984*. Among his dystopic inventions is a fictional pamphlet about the new order. Every day begins with a Two Minute Hate prayer. The official language is Newspeak. One of its concepts is Crimestop, or protective stupidity. Then there is Doublespeak – “the ability to believe that black is white, and more, to know that black is white, and to forget that one has ever believed the contrary”. This demands a continuous alteration of the past. “This day-to-day falsification of the past, carried out by the Ministry

of Truth, is as necessary to the stability of the regime as the work of repression and espionage carried out by the Ministry of Love.” He goes on:

the essential act of the Party is to use conscious deception whilst retaining the firmness of purpose that goes with complete honesty. To tell deliberate lies while genuinely believing in them, to forget any fact that has become inconvenient, and ... to draw it back from oblivion for just so long as it is needed, to deny the existence of objective reality and all the while to take account of the reality which one denies – all this is indispensably necessary. Even in using the word doublethink it is necessary to exercise doublethink. For by using the word one admits that one is tampering with reality; by a fresh act of doublethink one erases this knowledge; and so on indefinitely, with the lie always one leap ahead of the truth.

About war the pamphlet tells us:

It does not matter whether the war is actually happening, and, since no decisive victory is possible, it does not matter whether the war is going well or badly. All that is needed is that a state of war should exist ... War, it will now be seen, is a purely internal affair. In the past, the ruling groups of all countries ... did fight against one another, and the victor always plundered the vanquished. In our own day they are not fighting against one another at all. The war is waged by each ruling group against its own subjects, and the object of the war is not to make or prevent conquests of territory, but to keep the structure of society intact. The very word ‘war’, therefore, has become misleading. It would probably be accurate to say that by becoming continuous war has ceased to exist.<sup>18</sup>

That is the truth about modern conflict – war is not meant to be won, it is meant to be continuous. It is also the truth of what we call communalism. Colonial India’s civil war became a post-colonial international war. And, yet, civil war continues to this day in each successor state. Our condition is such that we genuinely believe our lies; it requires the lie to always be one step ahead of the truth. We, too, need to love the infallible Big Brother, “the face on the hoardings”. Many of us are now habituated to lies and half-truths – speech has been reduced to polemic. Few wish to listen, read, think and reflect. All around us are sociopaths and criminally insane persons armed with warrior myths, whose lust for power poisons the very air we breathe. These pathological creatures do not mean to win the civil war they have generated (and in which task, alas, ordinary people assisted them). Rather, they wish it to be a permanent state of affairs. It is up to us whether we shall permit this rampaging injustice to continue unchallenged. Yes, 1984 was India’s Orwellian year par excellence. After all, George was born in India.

*Day after day, throughout the winter,  
We hardened ourselves to live by bluest reason  
In a world of wind and frost*

– Wallace Stevens

## Economic&PoliticalWEEKLY

available at

### Oxford Bookstore-Mumbai

Apeejay House  
3, Dinshaw Vacha Road, Mumbai 400 020  
Ph: 66364477



## NOTES

- These aspects are described in detail in three texts – Mukhoty and Kothari (1984), Chakravarti and Haksar (1987), and Mitta and Phoolka (2007).
- From the Supreme Court judgment awarding the death sentence to Afzal Guru, dated 4 August 2005.
- Sajjan Kumar won with over eight and a half lakh votes (Mitta and Phoolka 2007: 73).
- Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* (henceforth CWMG), Volume 90, p 541, Gandhi Heritage Portal (<https://www.gandhiheritageportal.org/the-collected-works-of-mahatma-gandhi>).
- My argument about the political implications of India's private armies may be read in "A Hard Rain Falling: On the Death of TP Chandrasekharan and Related Matters (EPW, June 2012)" (Simeon 2012).
- More information about the SVA may be read in this archival collection: "Dilip Simeon's blog: Sampradayikta Virodhi Andolan", <http://dilipsimeon.blogspot.in/search/label/Sampradayikta%20Virodhi%20Andolan>
- I have found two articles that mention this hearing, neither of them bring up the communally loaded statement of the judge. But, I heard it, and I am sure others did as well.
- These figures are estimates. See Simeon (2013a).
- The following is a list of the inquiries instituted: Kapur Mittal Committee, Jain Banerjee Committee, Potti Roshia Committee, Jain Aggarwal Committee, Ahuja Committee, Dhillon Committee, Narula Committee, and Nanavati Commission.
- The year 1528 was when Babar, founder of the Mughal dynasty, is alleged to have ordered the destruction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. This event was the basis of the Ram Janmabhumi-Babri Masjid controversy launched by the RSS/BJP/VHP in the late 1980s, which led to the demolition of the Babri Mosque in December 1992.
- A perceptive Hindutva ideologue reportedly remarked that organisationally speaking, the Congress had won the 1984 elections, but it was an ideological victory for the BJP (Singh 2010: 130).
- "When finally I am killed, it will be the government that kills me" – Lasantha Wickrematunge (BBC News 2009).
- For contemporary reference material on Bhindranwale, see Lamba (2004).
- In his prayer meeting of 21 November 1947, Gandhi claimed he had received information about the near-destruction of 137 mosques in Delhi. See, CWMG, Volume 90, p 79.
- CWMG, Volume 90, p 445. The seven point Declaration is on page 444.
- Readers who wish to study Gandhi's assassination may consult the Jeevan Lal Kapur Inquiry Report of 1969. See Kapur (1970).
- A brief account of whom may be read in my review article "Superfluous People" (Simeon 2013b).
- George Orwell, "The Theory and Practice of Oligarchical Collectivism", Chapter 9, in 1984 (1949).
- activities in Bangladesh", 30 March, <http://bdinn.com/news/kolkata-muslims-protest-against-anti-islamic-activities-in-bangladesh/>
- BBC News (2009): "Sri Lankan Editor Row Escalates", 13 January, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south-asia/7827262.stm>
- (2014): "Sri Lanka Moderate Monk Critical of Anti-Muslim Violence Beaten", 19 June, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-27918343>
- Chakravarti, Uma and Nandita Haksar (1987): *The Delhi Riots: Three Days in the Life of a Nation* (New Delhi: South Asia Books/Lancer International).
- Chatterjee, Garga (2013): "A Dangerous Connivance", *The Hindu*, 6 April.
- Dikshit, Vineet (1994): "BJP Move to Shield Cadres involved in '84 Riots'", *The Pioneer*, 11 April, [http://www.sacw.net/IMG/pdf/Pioneer\\_April\\_11\\_1994\\_BJP\\_Cadres\\_1984.pdf](http://www.sacw.net/IMG/pdf/Pioneer_April_11_1994_BJP_Cadres_1984.pdf)
- Goyal, D R (2000): *Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh* (New Delhi: Radha Krishna Prakashan).
- Habib, Haroon (2014): "Bangladesh Post-Poll Violence Hits Minorities", *The Hindu*, 8 January.
- Haider, Mobarak (2013): "A Society at War with Itself", *Dawn*, 29 January.
- Kapur, Jeevan Lal (1970): "Report of Commission of Inquiry into Conspiracy to Murder Mahatma Gandhi", Jeevan Lal Kapur Inquiry Report of 1969, Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, <https://archive.org/details/JeevanlalKapurCommissionReport>
- Lamba, P S (2004): "Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale: Five Myths", *The Sikh Times*, 6 June, [http://www.sikhtimes.com/bios\\_060604a.html](http://www.sikhtimes.com/bios_060604a.html)
- Mitta, Manoj and H S Phoolka (2007): *When a Tree Shook Delhi: The 1984 Carnage and Its Aftermath* (New Delhi: Roli Books).
- Mukhoty, Gobinda and Rajni Kothari (1984): *Who Are the Guilty?* (New Delhi: People's Union for Civil Liberties and People's Union for Democratic Rights).
- The Nanyang Post* (2013): "Anti-Muslim Riots Haunt Shattered Myanmar City", 8 July, <http://www.nanyangpost.net/2013/07/anti-muslim-riots-haunt-shattered.html>
- Nauriya, Anil (2003): "Portrait as Mirror", *The Hindu*, 3 March, <http://www.thehindu.com/2003/03/03/stories/2003030300371000.htm>
- Payne, Robert (2003): *The Life and Death of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Rupa & Co).
- Sardesai, Rajdeep (2013): "Confront These Painful Truths about Communalism", *Hindustan Times*, 1 November.
- Sharma, Rajnish (2002): "Sikh Riots: BJP Names Figure in Records", *Hindustan Times*, 2 February, <http://www.sacw.net/article8089.html>
- Simeon, Dilip (1986): "Communalism in Modern India: A Theoretical Examination (1986)", *Dilip Simeon's blog*, <http://dilipsimeon.blogspot.in/2012/08/communalism-in-modern-india-theoretical.html>
- Simeon, Dilip (2012): "A Hard Rain Falling: On the Death of TP Chandrasekharan and Related Matters (EPW, June 2012)", Dilip Simeon's blog, <http://dilipsimeon.blogspot.in/2012/06/hard-rain-falling-on-death-of-tp.html>
- (2013a): "The Law of Killing: A Brief History of Indian Fascism", *Dilip Simeon's Blog*, <http://dilipsimeon.blogspot.in/2013/07/the-law-of-killing-brief-history-of.html>
- (2013b): "Book Review: Superfluous People – Rahul Pandita's 'Our Moon Has Blood Clots'", Dilip Simeon's blog, <http://dilipsimeon.blogspot.in/2013/05/book-review-superfluous-people-rahul.html>
- Singh, Pritam (2010): *Economy, Culture and Human Rights: Turbulence in Punjab, India and Beyond* (Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective).
- SVA (1986): "India: SVA's 1986 Appeal to the National Integration Council", Sampradayikta Virodhi Andolan, *Mainstream*, 26 April, <http://www.sacw.net/article8493.html>
- The Times of India* (1996): "Darshan Kaur Identifies Bhagat in Courtroom as the 'Neta'", 16 November, [http://www.sacw.net/IMG/pdf/ToI\\_Nov\\_16\\_1996-Darshan\\_Kaur\\_HKL\\_Bhagat\\_sacw-net.pdf](http://www.sacw.net/IMG/pdf/ToI_Nov_16_1996-Darshan_Kaur_HKL_Bhagat_sacw-net.pdf)
- (2003): "Rope in LTTE to Stop ISI Threat: Thackeray", 27 August, <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/Rope-in-LTTE-to-stop-ISI-threat-Thackeray/articleshow/150076.cms>

## REFERENCES

- Ambedkar, B R (1946): *Pakistan or The Partition of India* (Bombay: Thacker & Co Ltd).
- Bal, Hartosh Singh (2012): "A Community Led by Dunces", *Open Magazine*, 26 May.
- Bangladesh Independent News Network (2013): "Kolkata Muslims Protest against Anti-Islamic

## Economic&amp;PoliticalWEEKLY

## EPW 5-Year CD-ROM 2004-08 on a Single Disk

The digital versions of *Economic and Political Weekly* for **2004, 2005, 2006, 2007** and **2008** are now available on a single disk. The **CD-ROM** contains the complete text of 261 issues published from 2004 to 2008 and comes equipped with a powerful search, tools to help organise research and utilities to make your browsing experience productive. The contents of the **CD-ROM** are organised as in the print edition, with articles laid out in individual sections in each issue.

With its easy-to-use features, the **CD-ROM** will be a convenient resource for social scientists, researchers and executives in government and non-government organisations, social and political activists, students, corporate and public sector executives and journalists.

Price for 5 year **CD-ROM** (in INDIA)

Individuals - Rs 1500

Institutions - Rs 2500

To order the **CD-ROM** send a bank draft payable at Mumbai in favour of *Economic and Political Weekly*.

Any queries please email: [circulation@epw.in](mailto:circulation@epw.in)

Circulation Manager,

**Economic and Political Weekly**

320-321, A to Z Industrial Estate, Ganpatrao Kadam Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai 400 013, India